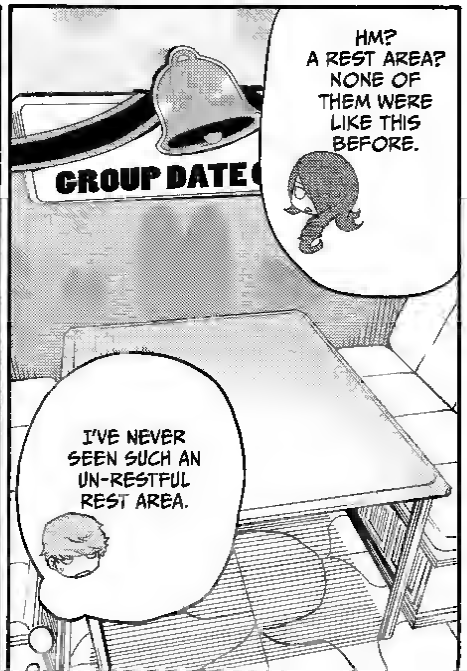
PERSONA Q
SHADOW OF THE LABYRINTH
SIDE: P3
Chapter 9
IS THIS WHAT I THINK IT IS?
WHOA...
...
?
WOBBLE
WOBBLE

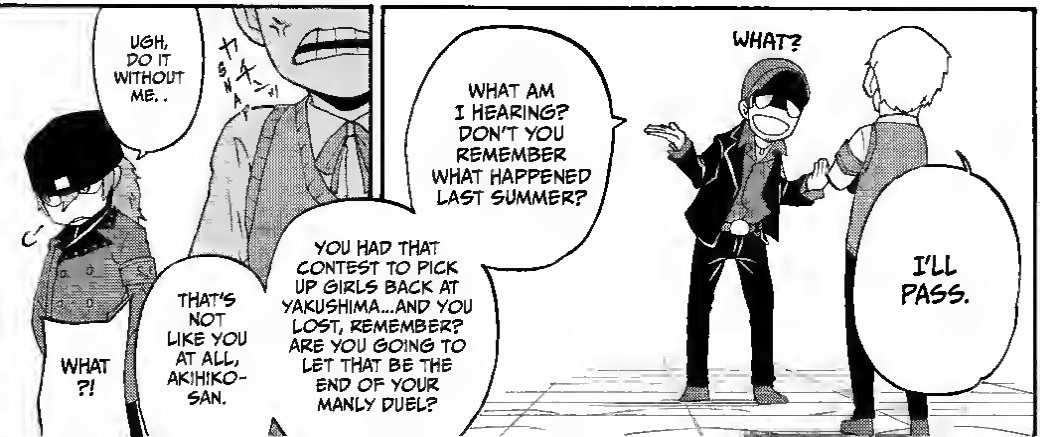
WOBBLE
COME ON, DON'T BE LIKE THAT.
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, BUT—
HEY, HEY.
A DEAD END, HUH? LET'S JUST IGNORE IT AND MOVE ON...


GROUP DATE
HM? A REST AREA? NONE OF THEM WERE LIKE THIS BEFORE.
I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH AN UN-RESTFUL REST AREA.

...WHAT'S A REAL GROUP DATE LIKE?
A REAL GROUP DATE IS MORE LIKE, YOU KNOW...A GAME OF WITS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN. YOU'RE ALL TESTED ON THE ABCS OF LOVE!
BUT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE GROUP DATE CAFÉ THAT YOU GUYS ORGANIZED, RIGHT?
THAT'S OKAY. I DON'T EVER WANT TO GO THROUGH THAT AGAIN.
BUT YOU KNOW, FOR A "GROUP DATE CAFÉ", I'M NOT SEEING A WHOLE LOT OF "GROUP DATE" STUFF.
A REAL GROUP DATE IS MORE LIKE...A GAMY MINCED MEAT OF MEN AND WOMEN BEING TESTED ON THE ASSORTMENT OF LOBSTER AND TAMARI SOY SAUCE?
YEAH, NOTHING LIKE THAT!
BASICALLY, BOYS AND GIRLS GET TOGETHER TO TALK AND GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER.
THEY GET TOGETHER TO TALK...
I WANNA DO THAT!
...OH.

GROUP DATE CAFÉ
KA-
THEN LET'S BEGIN. ALL PARTICIPANTS, LINE UP.
CLICK
YOU'RE SCARING ME.

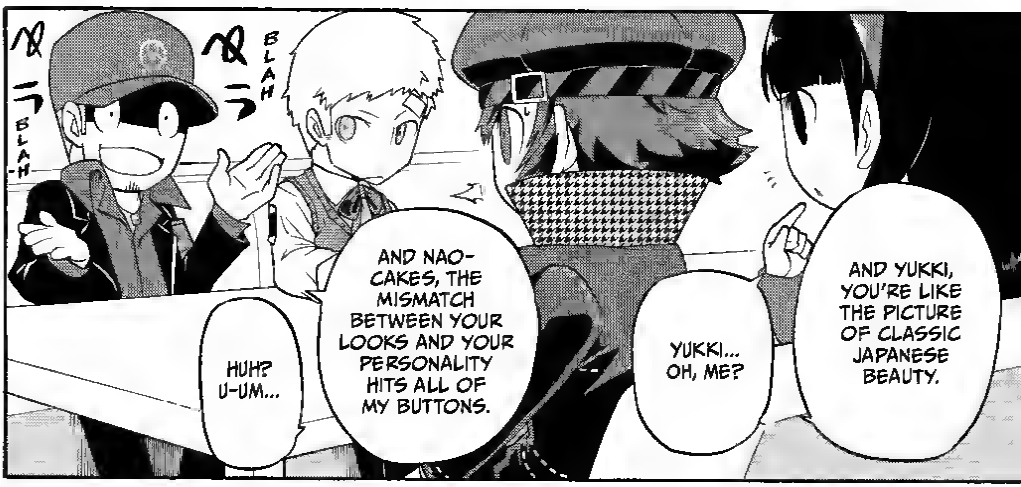
I-I'M NOT DOING IT! YOU CAN'T MAKE ME!
WE GET IT, OKAY? WE GEKKOU GUYS WILL DO OUR PART FOR REI-CHAN AND STAND IN FOR THE TRAUMATIZED TEAM YASO GUYS!
RIGHT, AKIHIKO-SAN? SHINJIRO-SAN?
!

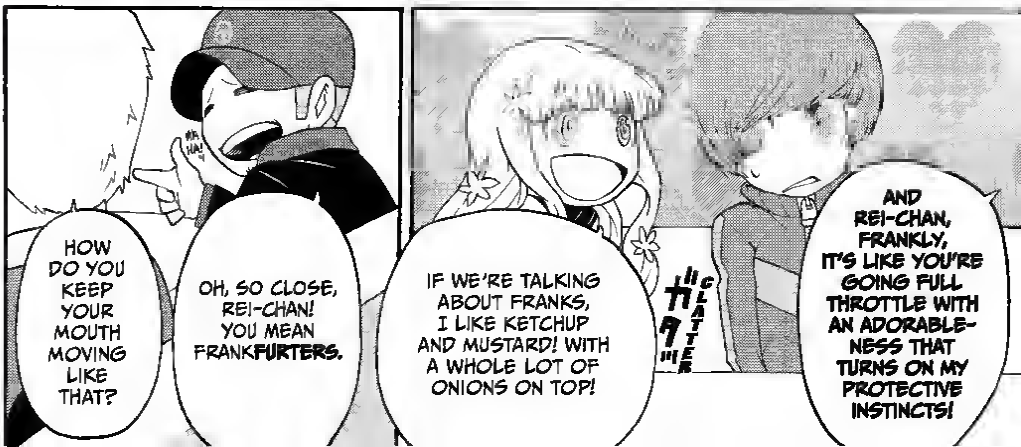

WHAT?
I'LL PASS.
WHAT AM I HEARING? DON'T YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED LAST SUMMER?
YOU HAD THAT CONTEST TO PICK UP GIRLS BACK AT YAKUSHIMA...AND YOU LOST, REMEMBER? ARE YOU GOING TO LET THAT BE THE END OF YOUR MANLY DUEL?
THAT'S NOT LIKE YOU AT ALL, AKIHIKO-SAN.
WHAT?!
UGH, DO IT WITHOUT ME. .
SNAP

READ THE ROOM, DUDE.
I WANT IN ON THE GROUP DATE
OKAY, THEN FOR THE GIRLS,
NO, I SAID DO IT WITHOUT ME!!
WHAT?!
FINE, I'LL DO A REMATCH!
LET'S GO, SHINJI!!
WHAT? NO FAIR! I WANNA DO IT, TOO!
GRRR!
WE'LL GET THE GIRLS FROM TEAM YASO!
...
URK ...!
GROUP DATE, HO!
...
FAT
OKAY! THAT'S FOUR AND FOUR. PERFECT!

FOING
FOING

HUH?
WHAT? WH-WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?!
I THOUGHT THIS WHEN WE FIRST MET, BUT CHIE-CHAN, YOU'RE ROCKING THE BOYISH LOOK.
MAN, IT SURE MAKES THINGS EXCITING TO BE SURROUNDED BY ALL THESE CUTE GIRLS.


BLAH
BLAH
HUH? U-UM...
AND NAO-CAKES, THE MISMATCH BETWEEN YOUR LOOKS AND YOUR PERSONALITY HITS ALL OF MY BUTTONS.
YUKKI... OH, ME?
AND YUKKI, YOU'RE LIKE THE PICTURE OF CLASSIC JAPANESE BEAUTY.


HA HA!
HOW DO YOU KEEP YOUR MOUTH MOVING LIKE THAT?
OH, SO CLOSE, REI-CHAN! YOU MEAN FRANKFURTERS.
IF WE'RE TALKING ABOUT FRANKS, I LIKE KETCHUP AND MUSTARD! WITH A WHOLE LOT OF ONIONS ON TOP!
CLATTER
AND REI-CHAN, FRANKLY, IT'S LIKE YOU'RE GOING FULL THROTTLE WITH AN ADORABLE-NESS THAT TURNS ON MY PROTECTIVE INSTINCTS!

?
YOU'RE THROWING THE WRONG BALL, MAN.
PROTEIN POWDER IS TYPICALLY MADE FROM WHEY, SOY, OR EGG PRODUCTS, AND...
I KNOW, I KNOW! A GAME OF CATCH, RIGHT?
COME ON, AKIHIKO-SAN. DIDN'T I TELL YOU CONVERSATION IS LIKE A GAME OF CATCH?
HMPH!
GAMES! NOT A BAD IDEA. LIKE A TOURNA-MENT?
SINCE WE WERE GOING TO HAVE A GROUP DATE CAFÉ FOR THE FESTIVAL, I READ SOME BOOKS ABOUT GROUP DATES.
...A HOW-TO GUIDE?
IT SAID IN A HOW-TO GUIDE THAT PEOPLE PLAY GAMES ON GROUP DATES.
OH, I KNOW. WHY DON'T WE PLAY A GAME?
I-I SEE...
I KNOW.
A PENALTY, HUH...
APPARENTLY A GAME CALLED "CATEGORIES" IS THE SUREFIRE WAY TO LIVEN THINGS UP.
YOU CHOOSE A CATEGORY, THEN EVERYONE TAKES TURNS GIVING THEIR ANSWER IN RHYTHM. IF YOU REPEAT AN ANSWER OR GET STUCK, YOU'RE PENALIZED!

HOW ABOUT THE LOSER HAS TO READ THIS IN FRONT OF EVERYONE?
すっ
SFF
IT'S SOME STATIONERY I PICKED UP IN FRONT OF THE VELVET ROOM, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHO IT BELONGS TO.
STATIONERY? WHAT IS IT... A POEM?
...
...

THE HEAVIER THE PENALTY, THE MORE EXCITING THE GAME.
LET'S CHOOSE A CATEGORY!
IF WE LOSE WE HAVE TO RECITE A POEM?! THAT'S HARSH...!
...I CAN'T LOSE NOW...

OOOH! MY FAVORITE KIND OF DOG IS A CORNDOG! TEE HEE!
OKAY!
DOG BREEDS! WHAT DO YOU THINK?
YEAH!
TWANG

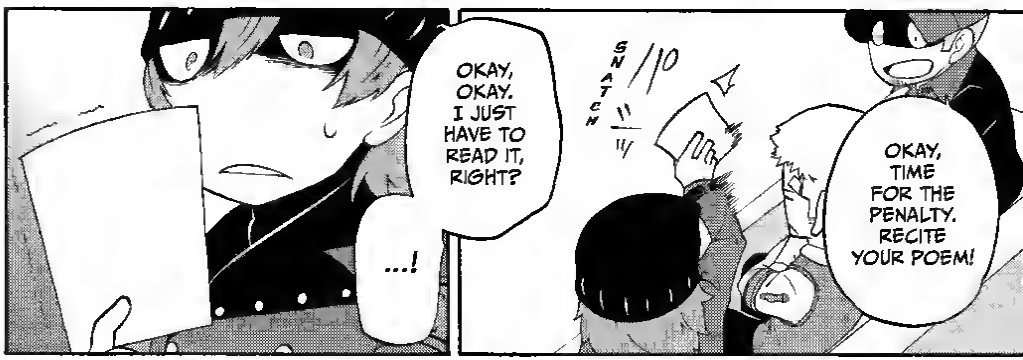
MMM
WE HAVE TO COME UP WITH A QUESTION THAT HAS LOTS OF ANSWERS?
HMMM...

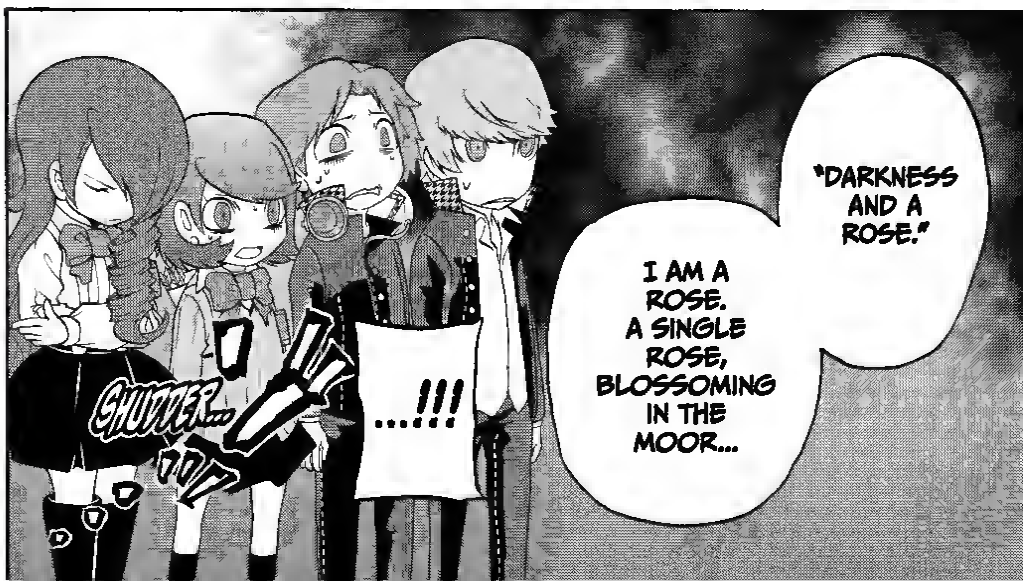
I HAVE A DOG NAMED MUKU...ER, WHAT KIND OF DOG IS HE AGAIN?
HUH?
HIS NAME ISN'T MUKU; IT'S CHOSOKABE.
NO... IT'S MUKU.
FEELS LIKE I HAVE A GOOD CHANCE.
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.
OH, MAN, REALLY? I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN DO THAT ONE. WHAT ABOUT YOU, AKIHIKO-SAN?
DOG BREEDS? I KNOW SOME.
AW, CRAP...
WOOF!
HA.
GROUP DATE CAFÉ
THEN OKAY, I'LL GO FIRST!
CATEGORIES, HERE WE GO!!
YEAH!!
YEAH!!

CLAP
SIBERIAN HUSKY.
POODLE!
SWEAT SWEAT
G-GOLDEN RETRIEVER!
SAINT BERNARD.
HOP
SHIBA INU.
FRESHNESS IS KEY IN MOZZARELLA!
MAL "CHEESE"!

CLAP
CLAP
KORO...?
SHINJIRO-SAN, ARE YOU STUMPED? THREE...TWO... ONE...
GASP ?!!
"KORO-CHA..."
!
UH, NO! ...ER, SHIBA INU...!!
LEADER JUST SAID THAT, AND YOU CAN'T COPY!
SHINJIRO-SAN IS OUT!!
?

OH MAN, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU LOST.
I DIDN'T GET A TURN, BUT A WIN IS A WIN.
...
DID YOU JUST CALL HIM "KORO-CHAN"?

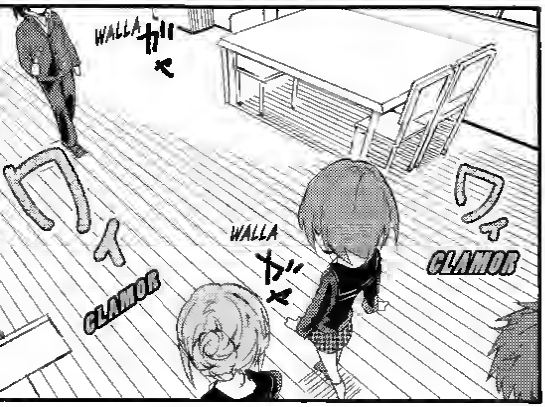

OKAY, OKAY. I JUST HAVE TO READ IT, RIGHT?
...!
SNATCH
OKAY, TIME FOR THE PENALTY. RECITE YOUR POEM!

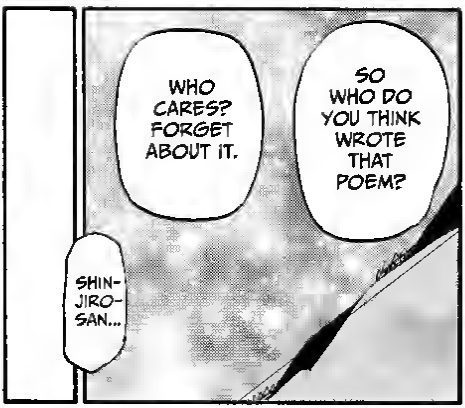

"DARKNESS AND A ROSE."
I AM A ROSE. A SINGLE ROSE, BLOSSOMING IN THE MOOR...
...!!!
SHUDDER...

...
A SORROWFUL ROSE.... WHITE PETALS MATTED WITH BLOOD... BLOOMING IN PROUD CRIMSON...
...IF ...IF YOU WANT TO PICK ME... DO SO...
I'LL PIERCE YOU WITH MY MILLION THORNS...
I...I WILL DRINK THE BLOOD...YOU SHED...AND FLOWER... WILDLY...IN THE DARKNESS...
GROUP DATE CAFÉ
IT'S REALLY NOT.
THIS MAY BE A GOOD WAY TO BUILD ONE'S MENTAL STAMINA.
GROUP DATES.
THAT POEM WAS REALLY COOL, SHIN-CHAN!
YOU MADE IT ALL THE WAY TO THE END! IT WAS SO MANLY!
...GA-HNGH...

DID YOU HAVE FUN, REI?
AH HA HA ...
IT WAS A LOT MORE FUN THAN THE ONES WE HAD AT OUR CULTURE FESTIVAL.
ANYWAY, I GUESS THAT MEANS OUR GROUP DATE IS OVER.
I'M GLAD TO HEAR IT.
IT WAS A GOOD EXPERIENCE FOR ALL OF US.
BEAM
IT WAS GREAT! I LOVE GROUP DATES!
YUP!
OH! SO WE MADE IT TO THE FINISH LINE!
OH, PLEASE WAIT! WE THINK THAT QUESTION ROOM IS THE LAST ONE!

WE'RE GETTING READINGS OF A BIG SHADOW PAST THAT POINT! THE BIGGEST ONE SO FAR!
...
SO IT'S FINALLY TIME TO FIGHT THE BOSS, EH?
THEN WE SHOULD GO BACK AND MAKE SURE WE'RE PREPARED.

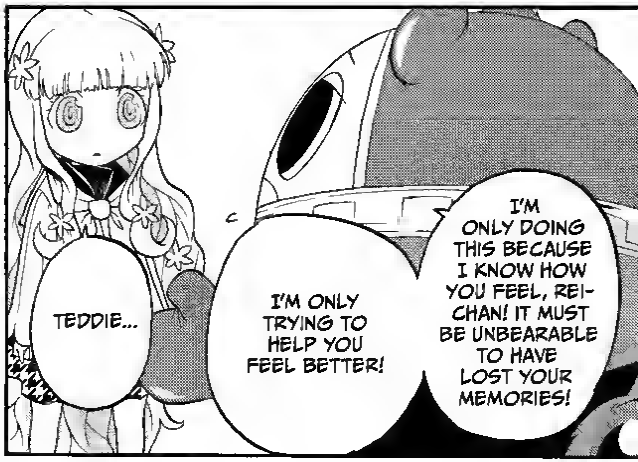

WALLA
WALLA
CLAMOR
CLAMOR


SO WHO DO YOU THINK WROTE THAT POEM?
WHO CARES? FORGET ABOUT IT.
SHIN-JIRO-SAN...

?

RATTLE
...!
NO.
GRR YOU ARE SO STUBBORN!

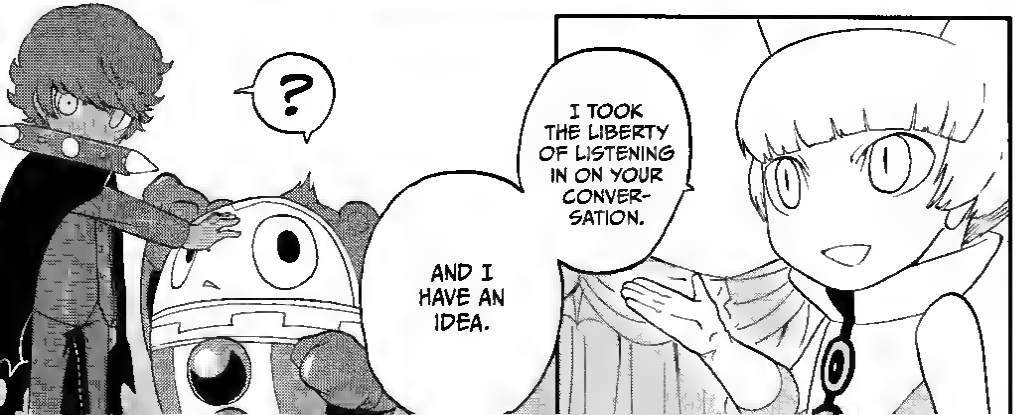
...


TEDDIE...
I'M ONLY TRYING TO HELP YOU FEEL BETTER!
I'M ONLY DOING THIS BECAUSE I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, REI-CHAN! IT MUST BE UNBEARABLE TO HAVE LOST YOUR MEMORIES!

AND THAT'S WHY I WANT TO TAKE REI-CHAN OUT ON A DATE...
REQUEST DENIED.

ALL RIGHT, I GET IT! LET'S TAKE THIS OUTSIDE! WE'LL SETTLE IT MAN-TO-BEAR!!
BRING IT ON!
OUTSIDE? MANTA BEAR? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

THAT IS QUITE ENOUGH!


I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF LISTENING IN ON YOUR CONVER-SATION.
AND I HAVE AN IDEA.
?

TRADING SHOW-DOWN?
YOU TWO WILL COMPETE BY TRADING ITEMS TO OBTAIN AN ITEM THAT WILL BEST SATISFY REI'S REQUEST.
THEN IT'S SETTLED.
EDIBLE DELIGHT?! I'LL TAKE IT!!
THE WINNER WILL BE GRANTED THE EPIC DELIGHT OF TAKING REI OUT ON A DATE.

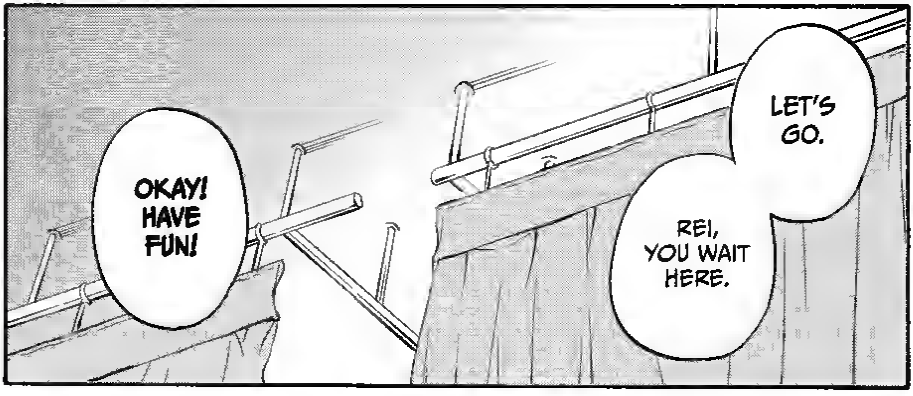
I'M IN! I'LL PROVE THAT I AM REI-CHAN'S BEAR IN SHINING ARMOR!
HEH HEH!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT I MUST NOT BACK DOWN.
SO I NEED TO DO THIS... TRADING SHOWDOWN?
...ZEN IS AT AN OBVIOUS DISADVAN-TAGE... AND SO,
I SUGGEST THAT YOU ASK THAT GENTLEMAN THERE TO ASSIST YOU.

YEAH.
THEN I ACCEPT YOUR HELP.
NO OBJECTIONS HERE! THAT'LL LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD!
OKAY.
LEADER.
NOW THEN, REI, PLEASE MAKE A REQUEST OF OUR CONTESTANTS.
HMM
A REQUEST?
SOMETHING I WANT, RIGHT? HMMM...
SOMETHING TO EAT! SUPER-SIZED!
ZEN, TEDDIE. PLEASE ACCEPT THESE.
THERE YOU HAVE IT. SOMETHING SUPER-SIZED TO EAT.
THOSE ARE THE CRITERIA FOR THIS CONTEST.
BUT I'LL BE HAPPY WITH ANYTHING ZEN GIVES ME.

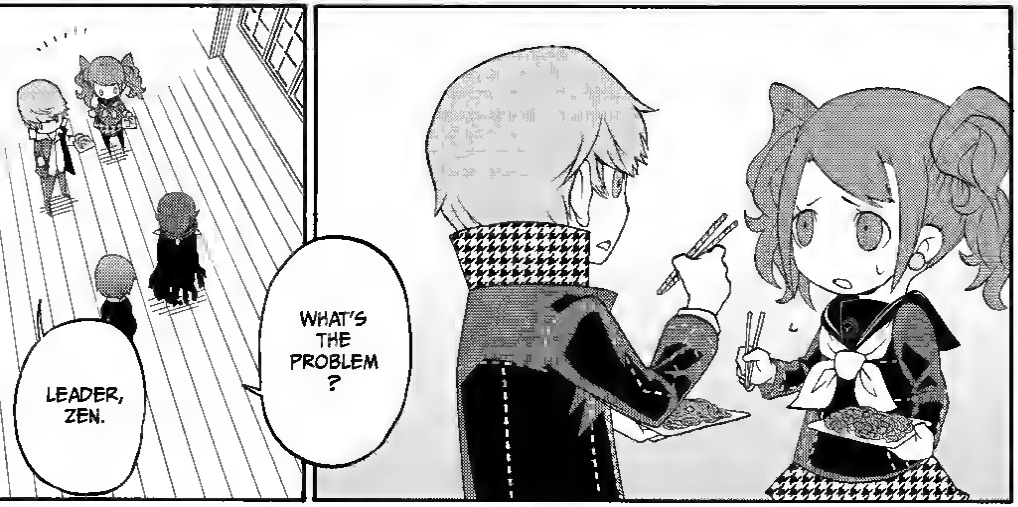
THE INSPIRATION FOR THIS SHOWDOWN COMES FROM THE STORY OF THE STRAW MILLIONAIRE.
WE DON'T HAVE STRAW LIKE HIS, SO INSTEAD I AM PROVIDING YOU WITH THESE CHOPSTICKS TO TRADE.
PLEASE TRY TO COME BACK WITH SOMETHING SUPER-SIZED THAT CAN BE EATEN.
OF COURSE WE WILL HAVE REI CHOOSE THE VICTOR.

BAM
I'LL WIN THAT DATE WITH REI-CHAN, YOU CAN COUNT ON IT!!
OKAY! THE EARLY BEAR CATCHES THE SALMON!

!!
GOOD LUCK, ZEN!
FURTHERMORE, TO KEEP EVERYTHING FAIR, THE CONTEST WILL END WHEN YOU HAVE EACH TRADED WITH THREE PEOPLE.


OKAY! HAVE FUN!
REI, YOU WAIT HERE.
LET'S GO.

HMMM...
?
BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW.
I KNOW THAT I'M SUPPOSED TO TURN THESE CHOPSTICKS INTO SOMETHING REI WANTS.
IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME.
I APOLOGIZE. I DIDN'T MEAN TO GET AN OUTSIDER MIXED UP IN THIS.


LEADER, ZEN.
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

HEY!
SAY AH!
NO, I'D RATHER NOT...
I'M SORRY, SENPAI. HERE, I'LL FEED YOU.
I'M THE ONE WHO DROPPED MY CHOPSTICKS. SENPAI GAVE ME HIS...
THERE WEREN'T ANY CHOPSTICKS AROUND, SO I WAS TRYING TO USE STRAWS INSTEAD.
I WAS GOING TO EAT SOME YAKISOBA, BUT I DROPPED MY CHOPSTICKS.

I APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT, BUT THAT'S OKAY...
BUT I WAS GOING TO FEED YOU!
I UNDERSTAND NOW.
SO THIS IS HOW I'M SUPPOSED TO GET SOMETHING FOR REI.

I'LL TAKE THOSE STRAWS.
HUH? ARE YOU SURE? I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO GIVE YOU FOR THEM.
...WOULD YOU LIKE TO USE THESE?

GLANCE
GLANCE
HM? THAT'S...
I MUST TRADE TWICE MORE TO GET A SUPER-SIZED FOOD ITEM.

DO YOU THINK I'LL FIND SOMETHING AT THE ROOF FOOD COURT?
UM, I WANTED TO PUT SOME SUGAR AND MILK IN MY COFFEE... BUT I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO STIR IT WITH.

NO, WE'RE DOING A THING.
REI-CHAN'S NOT WITH YOU?
ZEN-KUN. LEADER.
FUUKA. IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?

I ACCEPT.
I ACCIDENTALLY ORDERED TWO.
HMMM...OH! YOU CAN HAVE THIS IF YOU WANT.
NO NEED.
DO YOU WANT A STRAW, TOO?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO USE THESE STRAWS?
MAY I? THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!
I CAN ONLY TRADE ONCE MORE.
AT THE RATE YOU'RE GOING, I'M BEAR-ANTEED TO WIN!
!
WELL, WELL, FANCY MEETING YOU HERE!

..LET'S PROCEED WITH CARE.
WRITHE...
...
WHAT REI-CHAN NEEDS IN A KNIGHT IS ME!
I WON'T LET YOU BEAT ME!
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
I CAN ONLY TRADE ONE MORE...
UUUUUUUUGH
...THE...THE SWEETNESS.. THE SWEEE-EETNEE-EESS...
KA-CLICK
BAM
WHOA, WAIT! IT'S ME!!!
A SHADOW ?!

Z-ZEN...
PLEASE... LET US HAVE THAT...
スリル...
WRITHE...

GO AHEAD AND SEE AND TASTE IT FOR YOURSELF.
HERE. FOR THE COFFEE.

OH MAN, COFFEE HAS NEVER TASTED BETTER IN MY LIFE.
WE'RE SAVED. THANKS, MAN.
WHAT HAPPENED?
FMM

FWOOSH
THIS IS WHAT I HAVE FOR YOU.
WE WILL NOW PRESENT THE CONTESTANTS' OFFERINGS, STARTING WITH ZEN'S.
I THANK YOU FOR YOUR VALIANT EFFORTS.
CAN I EAT IT?!
APPARENTLY IT'S CALLED A SUPER-SIZED JUMBO PARFAIT.
WHAAAT?! WHAT IS THIS?! A PARFAIT ?!
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
IT LOOKS SO GOOD!!
YES.
BUT JUNPEI AND YOSUKE SAID THEY WERE UNABLE TO FINISH IT...
MMMM!! YUMMY!! SO SWEET!!
MUNCH
MUNCH

RUMMAGE
THE SUPER-SIZED GOURMET ITEM THAT I HAVE PRE-BEARED ESPECIALLY FOR THIS OCCASION ...
MOVING ON, TEDDIE. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER TO REI?
ZEN! THAT WAS SO GOOD!! THANK YOU SO MUCH!!
カラ
EMPTY
FWUFF
もさっ
...IS THIS!
...?
...TEDDIE
!!!
WOOOW!
IT'S HUGE!
I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH BIG BLUE COTTON CANDY!
HAVE I LOST...?

YOU SEE, IN ORDER TO PREVENT CHEATING, I PLACED A MARK ON THE CHOPSTICKS I GAVE EACH OF YOU BEFORE THE CONTEST.
WHAT?!
WHERE AND WITH WHOM DID YOU TRADE TO OBTAIN THIS COTTON CANDY?
W-WELL, YOU SEE...
もしゃ
もしゃ
I WENT EVERY-WHERE... BUT NO ONE WOULD TRADE WITH ME.
SO I TOOK SOME OF MY FUR AND WRAPPED IT AROUND THE CHOP-STICKS...
TEDDIE IS DISQUALIFIED FOR BREAK-ING THE RULES.
...
IT'S SCRUFFY AND TANGLY...
THIS COTTON CANDY ISN'T SWEET...
NOOOO!! MY DATE WITH REI-CHAN...!!
AND SO THE WINNER OF THIS TRADING SHOWDOWN IS ZEN!

YOU AND ZEN AND I CAN ALL GO ON A DATE TOGETHER!
TEDDIE.
...INDEED.
...
REI-CHAN ...
YOU DON'T MIND IF WE ALL GO, DO YOU?
THERE YOU ARE, LEADER. I THINK WE SHOULD HEAD BACK INTO THE LABYRINTH SOON.
SHOVE
ON SECOND THOUGHT, REQUEST DENIED.
JUST PUT YOUR HAND ON MY ARM. ♡

I'LL WORK HARD, TOO!!
I'LL DO MY BEST, FOR THE SAKE OF MY DATE WITH REI-CHAN!!
WE'RE SETTING OUT? THEN THE DATE WILL HAVE TO WAIT.
THEN TAKE CARE, EVERYONE.
SHOONK

CREEEAK
SO THIS IS WHERE WE FIND OUT WHO LEADER'S DESTINED PARTNER IS.
BRACE YOURSELVES, EVERYONE.
THIS IS THE FINAL QUESTION ROOM.

?
FALL IN LOVE
HUH...? A DEAD END?

YOU HAVE OVERCOME MANY TRIALS TO FINALLY ARRIVE AT THE LAST ROOM.
OH, IT'S THAT VOICE.
AND SO, LAUGH OR CRY, THIS IS THE LAST QUESTION.
QUESTION 4: TOMORROW IS YOUR GIRLFRIEND'S BIRTHDAY. WHAT WILL YOU GIVE HER?
1. CAKE
2. FLOWERS
3. A RING
...CAKE.
I WOULD GET HER A CAKE AND FLOWERS.
A RING MIGHT BE MOVING A LITTLE FAST.
NO ONE ASKED YOU.

AND NOW IT IS FINALLY TIME TO ANNOUNCE YOUR DESTINED PARTNER.
BY YOUR OWN WILL, YOU ALL HAVE SELECTED A SINGLE ANSWER.
EEP! THE LIGHTS WENT OUT!
I KNOW IT'S NOT MY DESTINED PARTNER, BUT I'M STILL NERVOUS...
RRRRUM
IS THIS INDIVIDUAL.
YOUR DESTINED PARTNER

ナニ!!
?
THINK
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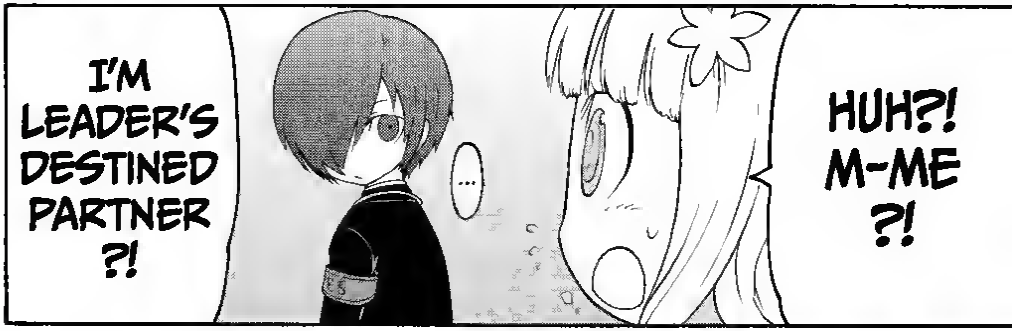
I'M LEADER'S DESTINED PARTNER ?!
...
HUH?! M-ME ?!

...SO HOW DO WE GET TO THE LABYRINTH'S BOSS?
WE CAN'T GO PAST A DEAD END...
SHE ALREADY HAS A KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR.
YOU'RE STARTING DOWN A ROCKY ROAD, LEADER.

KA-POP
は。
か?
?!
To Be Continued